DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 527 PS 030 896

TITLE	Child Trafficking in West Africa: Policy Responses. Innocenti Insight.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Children's Fund, Florence (Italy). Innocenti Research Centre.
ISBN	ISBN-88-85401-80-5
PUB DATE	2002-04-00
NOTE	37p.
AVAILABLE FROM	UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, Piazza SS, Annunziata 12, 50122 Florence, Italy. Tel: 39-055-203-30; Fax: 39-055-244-817; e-mail: florenceorders@unicef.org; Web site: http://www.unicef-icdc.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Child Labor; *Children; *Childrens Rights; Federal Government; Foreign Countries; Migration; Nongovernmental Organizations; *Public Policy; *Slavery; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	Abductions; Africa (Central); *Africa (West); Exploitation; National Policy; Policy Implementation; Policy Issues; Policy Research; Social Policy; UNICEF

ABSTRACT

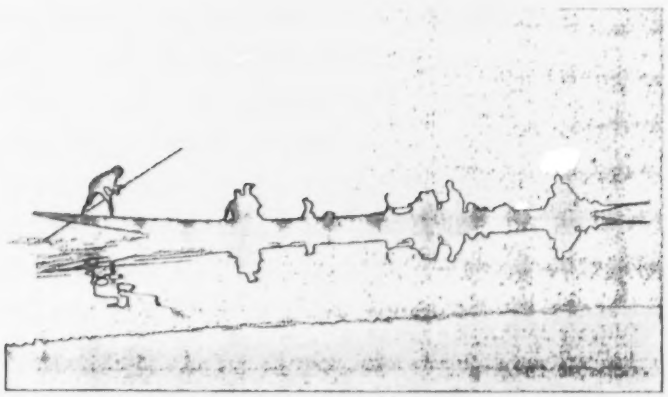
This report examines policy responses and programming trends to combat the growing specter of child trafficking, focusing on the region of west and central Africa where strenuous advocacy efforts by UNICEF and its partners have helped to bring this problem to national and international attention. The report focuses on policy trends on child trafficking in Benin, Burkina, Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivorie, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. The report includes examples of good practice and stresses the potential for greater cooperation between the main international agencies working on this issue. Part 1 of the report focuses on the international normative framework on child trafficking, including the international human rights standards that commit nations to act on this issue, and examining the definitions of child trafficking and the increasing convergence of anti-trafficking strategies in west Africa. Part 2 analyzed current perceptions on child trafficking as a child labor or clandestine migration issue, the role of the media, and the heterogeneity of policy responses. Part 3 presents a thematic review of the national policy responses in west Africa, highlighting the impact of awareness raising campaigns, the role of education, the challenge of monitoring borders, and the lessons learned in prevention initiatives in recent years. This section stresses the need for a stronger legal framework and a careful review of repatriation as a predominant response to child trafficking. Part 4 summarizes UNICEF policy and programming responses on child trafficking in west Africa, outlining its mandate, its regional strategy, and its main activities. Part 5 calls for greater interagency collaboration on child trafficking in the region, giving examples of current cooperation and areas of complementarity. Part 6 delineates conclusions and recommendations. (Contains 28 references.) (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

Innocenti Insight

ED 472 527

CHILD TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA



POLICY RESPONSES

PS 030896

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Abegglen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

unicef

United Nations Children's Fund
Innocenti Research Centre
Florence, Italy

UNICEF
Innocenti Insight

CHILD TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA: POLICY RESPONSES

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa

unicef

United Nations Children's Fund
Innocenti Research Centre
Florence, Italy

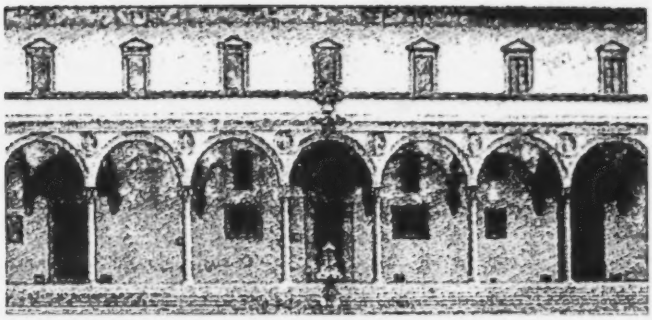
The publications produced by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre are contributions to a global debate on child rights issues and include a wide range of opinions. For that reason, the Centre may produce publications that do not necessarily reflect UNICEF policies or approaches on some topics. These publications are published by the Centre in order to stimulate further dialogue on child rights.

Cover design: Miller, Craig & Cocking, Oxfordshire - UK
Layout and phototypesetting: Bernard & Co, Siena - Italy
Printed by: Tipografia Giuntina, Florence, Italy

ISBN 88-85401-80-5

April 2002

Cover photo: © UNICEF/HQ93-2219. A man pushes a piroque through placid waters, his passengers silhouetted in their seats, as they cross the Niger River by the southern town of Segou. Giacomo Pirozzi.



UNICEF INNOCENTI RESEARCH CENTRE

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, was established in 1988 to strengthen the research capability of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and to support its advocacy for children worldwide. The Centre (formally known as the International Child Development Centre) helps to identify and research current and future areas of UNICEF's work. Its prime objectives are to improve international understanding of issues relating to children's rights and to help facilitate the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in both industrialized and developing countries.

The Centre's publications are contributions to a global debate on child rights issues and include a wide range of opinions. For that reason, the Centre may produce publications that do not necessarily reflect UNICEF policies or approaches on some topics. The views expressed are those of the authors and are published by the Centre in order to stimulate further dialogue on child rights.

The Centre collaborates with its host institution in Florence, the Istituto degli Innocenti, in selected areas of work. Core funding for the Centre is provided by the Government of Italy, while financial support for specific projects is also provided by other governments, international institutions and private sources, including UNICEF National Committees.

Contents

FOREWORD vii

INTRODUCTION ix

1. CHILD TRAFFICKING: A NEW INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK 1
   1.1 Towards a common definition of child trafficking 1
   1.2 Converging strategies in West Africa 3

2. FROM PERCEPTIONS TO RESPONSES 5
   2.1 Perceptions differ from country to country 5
   2.2 Child trafficking, child labour and illegal immigration 7
   2.3 The media factor 7
   2.4 Heterogenous policy responses 7

3. THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL POLICY RESPONSES IN WEST AFRICA 13
   3.1 Prevention 13
   3.2 Protection 18

4. UNICEF POLICY AND PROGRAMMING ON CHILD TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA 21

5. A CALL FOR INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION 23
   5.1 UNICEF/IOM collaboration in the region 23
   5.2 UNICEF/ILO collaboration in the region 24
   5.3 Special fora for cooperation 24
   5.4 Alliances in prevention 25
   5.5 Complementarity in action 25

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 27

FOREWORD

The trafficking of children is one of the gravest violations of human rights in the world today. Children and their families are ensnared by the empty promises of the trafficking networks – promises of a better life, of an escape route from poverty – and every year, hundreds of thousands of children are smuggled across borders and sold as mere commodities. Their survival and development are threatened, and their rights to education, to health, to grow up within a family, to protection from exploitation and abuse, are denied.

Their plight is of growing concern to governments, international agencies, NGOs and the media and there is increasing awareness of the complexity of child trafficking as a complex intercountry phenomenon.

It is clear that the elimination of child trafficking will require the coordinated efforts of all those concerned, from governments to local communities, working together in a campaign backed by international cooperation. Important international standards are already in place, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, which came into force earlier this year, the Supplementary Protocol to the International Convention on Organized Crime to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the new ILO Convention 182.

However, the implementation of these standards requires a proper understanding of the problem and a clear commitment to its elimination. Is child trafficking recognized as a serious issue? What is being done to tackle this problem? Who are the main actors? How effective are their efforts and how coordinated are their activities? What strategies may work in the struggle against child trafficking?

Quality research and analysis on existing policies and programmes is essential to the creation of effective strategies against child trafficking. Good data enhances understanding of the phenomenon and strengthens the efforts of those working to protect children's rights.

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre has worked with the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa to identify effective policy solutions in eight countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. This study focuses on a region that is badly affected by the phenomenon, aiming to increase understanding of this reality and maximize the effectiveness of measures to overcome it. It illustrates the importance of field-driven research and the essential role that research plays in policy formulation and the proper design of programmes.

The study has analysed policy responses and programming interventions in each country to inspire policy responses for UNICEF and its partners on the ground. The entire process has been formulated in partnership with regional and national staff and is stimulating inter-agency collaboration, identified as a priority by the research.

We hope that this study will be a concrete tool for effective policy solutions and programme design – a solid demonstration of the value of research to the global commitment for children's rights.

Marta Santos Pais
Director, UNICEF
Innocenti Research Centre

Rima Salah
Regional Director, UNICEF
West and Central Africa Regional Office

INTRODUCTION

This study examines policy responses and programming trends to combat the growing spectre of child trafficking – a serious and far-reaching denial of children's rights.[1] It is set against a background of growing concern about this phenomenon and the rapid growth of activities intended to address it. International organizations, national governments, law enforcement authorities/institutions, development agencies and the media are all focusing on this issue and, as a result, the number of players and interventions is spiraling upwards, with all the dangers of duplicated effort and lack of coordination. It is vital, at this point, to focus on policy responses – the framework in which these interventions are taking place.

The study focuses on West and Central Africa, where strenuous advocacy efforts by UNICEF and its partners, coupled with massive media coverage, have helped to push this issue up the agenda. In early 2000, senior government representatives from across the region met in Gabon to adopt the Libreville Common Platform for Action, pledging to act against child trafficking. But such positive trends have not always been accompanied by concrete results for children.

This study focuses on the policy trends on child trafficking in eight countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. It includes examples of good practice and stresses the potential for greater cooperation between the main international agencies working on this issue.

It does not focus on the tragedies of child trafficking – on the appalling conditions in which hundreds of thousands of children live in servitude, denied their most fundamental rights to respect for their human dignity, to basic services and to childhood itself. These horrors are documented elsewhere. And it does not focus on the debate over the magnitude of this issue. There are various estimates for the number of children trafficked in West and Central Africa each year. The lack of reliable data suggests that such estimates should be treated with caution. But when it comes to child trafficking, even one child is one too many.

Part One focuses on the international normative framework on child trafficking, including the international human rights standards that commit nations to act on this issue. It examines the definitions of child trafficking and the increasing convergence of anti-trafficking strategies in West Africa.

Part Two analyses current perceptions on child trafficking, which vary from country to country. This section also examines the varying perceptions of child trafficking as a child labour or clandestine migration issue, the role of the media and the heterogeneity of policy responses.

Part Three is a thematic review of the national policy responses in West Africa. The study highlights the impact of awareness raising campaigns, the role of education, the challenge of monitoring borders and the lessons learned in prevention initiatives in recent years. Examining protection responses, the study stresses the need for a stronger legal framework and a careful review of repatriation as a predominant response to child trafficking.

Part Four summarizes UNICEF policy and programming responses on child trafficking in West

[1] This study is based on research by Roberto Benes, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, on policy and programming approaches at the country level in West and Central Africa, and Laetitia Bazzi-veil, on global policy trends and inter-agency cooperation at regional level.

Africa, outlining its mandate on this issue, its regional strategy and its main activities.

Finally, Part Five calls for greater inter-agency collaboration on child trafficking in the region, giving examples of current cooperation and areas of complementarity.

This research was carried out in the context of the Child Trafficking in West and Central Africa Project – a close partnership between the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa (WCARO) and the UNICEF Country Offices in the eight selected countries. The methodology was developed in collaboration with UNICEF New York headquarters and was informed by dialogue with staff in the region to ensure that the research was of genuine relevance to programmes. It was built on field-based research, including interviews with key actors and visits to specific areas where projects for trafficked children have been put in place.

This study is a synthesis of the findings of national analyses produced by the Project and refers to a specific research period: December 2000 to June 2001. There may, therefore, be some variations in programming realities at the time of publication.

The study aims to boost awareness of child trafficking and its intercountry nature, enhance national capacity to address this phenomenon, and inform policy responses and interagency cooperation. Its results have been discussed in a range of fora to create a team of colleagues and partners who can use the findings to support all actors in the struggle against child trafficking. It is intended to be a tool for those working on this issue.

This study was carried out with the financial support of the Italian Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Cooperazione allo Sviluppo in the context of its core contribution to the activities of the Innocenti Research Centre and as evidence of Italy's continuous efforts to combat child exploitation.

1. CHILD TRAFFICKING: A NEW INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

There is growing international recognition of child trafficking as a serious violation of children's rights – rights affirmed by important international human rights treaties dating back to the 1956 UN Convention on the abolition of slavery, slave trading and institutions and practices similar to slavery. Today, the three main legal pillars are:

- The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), its general principles and its specific provisions, particularly Article 35 which calls on States Parties to "*take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form*" – and Article 32, which recognizes the child's right "*to be protected from economic exploitation*". The Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography of 25 May 2000[2] reaffirms the values of the CRC and addresses policy measures to prevent and combat this phenomenon.
- Convention No. 182 of the ILO on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999), which in article 3 (a) recognizes child trafficking as one of the worst forms of child labour: "*all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict*", and calls for action by Member States to eliminate them.
- The UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, particularly women and children (The Palermo Protocol), supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) of 15 November 2000.[3][4]

The adoption of these international legal instruments represents real progress in the fight against child trafficking. The Palermo Protocol, for example, provides the international definition of trafficking. It aims to prevent, suppress and punish the trafficking of persons, provides the legal foundation for judicial cooperation between countries and for the strengthening of safeguards to ensure the protection of witnesses.[5]

1.1 TOWARDS A COMMON DEFINITION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING

The recognition of children's rights, and the resulting obligations for States Parties, provide a legal basis to combat child trafficking. But their scope is limited by the lack of a clear and publicly accepted definition of child trafficking in West Africa, where the terms "trafficking", "abduction" or "sale of children" have different meanings in different countries, with real implications for policy responses.

The Palermo Protocol, with its definition of trafficking, provides useful guidance for law reform and the criminalization of this practice. According to Article 3 (a) of the Protocol:

[2] General Assembly, Resolution of 25 May 2000, entered into force on 18 January 2002.
[3] General Assembly, Resolution 54/129 of 15 November 2000, (not yet entered into force).
[4] The Protocol against illegal trafficking in migrants by land, air and sea, another significant international instrument (not yet entered into force).
[5] UNICEF participated in the development of CTOC and its Protocols to ensure its consistency with the CRC as well as the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which was being drafted at the same time.

'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs ".

Trafficking in persons is, therefore, envisaged as the transfer of persons by fraudulent means for exploitative purposes.

On child trafficking, sub-paragraph (c) of the same article goes further, in that it is not deemed necessary for fraudulent means to be used for a situation to be classified as child trafficking: *"The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article"*. This is of fundamental importance in West and Central Africa, where child trafficking often occurs with the consent of the parents and, sometimes, of the children themselves.

In the light of the definition of 'the child' adopted by the CRC, these principles apply to anyone under 18 years of age.

The reference to an exploitative purpose establishes a clear distinction between the phenomenon of trafficking in persons referred to in these instruments and the trafficking in migrants. In West and Central Africa this is a fundamental distinction. This sub-region is criss-crossed by migration, some of it dating back centuries. This new definition, therefore, compels States and their partners to distinguish between child trafficking and the seasonal migration of child workers and the situation of immigrant children exposed to labour exploitation.

It is interesting to compare the definition in the Inter-American Convention on International Child Trafficking, adopted by the Organization of American States in March 1994. Article 2 sub-paragraph (b) defines child trafficking as the abduction, transportation or the retention of a child or the attempt to abduct, transport or retain a child, *for illegal purposes or by illegal means*. This definition covers a wide range of situations. If the means used to transfer the child are illegal, the legal status of the purpose of the transfer becomes immaterial. This Convention addresses child trafficking for adoption, where the aim may be legal but the means are fraudulent.

The Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography gives a broad definition of the sale of children that covers many constituents of child trafficking. This makes it possible to prosecute intermediaries as well as employment agents and employers. Article 2 (a) of the Protocol defines the sale of children as any action or transaction that transfers a child from one person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other benefit. Article 3 sub-paragraph 1 (a) calls on States Parties to make it a criminal offence to offer, deliver or accept, by whatever means, a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, transfer of organs of the child for profit, or engagement of the child in forced labour.

Both protocols emphasize international cooperation as a key political measure for States Parties to eliminate child trafficking. They contain converging preventive strategies based on awareness raising, strengthening the legislative framework and combating social and economic inequality.

The Palermo Protocol proposes effective measures to combat and prevent trafficking. In particular, under article 9, States have an obligation to:

- take the necessary action, such as research, media campaigns and social and economic measures to prevent and combat trafficking;
- tackle the factors, such as poverty and underdevelopment, that make people vulnerable to trafficking;
- strengthen legal provisions and educational, social and cultural measures to cut demand for trafficked children.

There is also a special emphasis on the rehabilitation of victims. Article 6 calls on States to assist the physical, psychological and social recovery of the victim in cooperation with NGOs and any other relevant actors (sub-paragraph 3); and to provide for the child's specific needs, including shelter, education and appropriate care (sub-paragraph 4).

The CRC Protocol, particularly articles 9 and 10, emphasizes:

- The need to tackle the root causes of the problem, such as poverty and under-development, which contribute to the vulnerability of children.
- Public information and awareness-raising activities.
- Prevention of incriminated practices through administrative measures and social programmes and policies.
- The criminal punishment of serious violations of children's rights addressed by the Protocol, and the reinforcement, implementation and dissemination of laws, administrative measures, social policies and programmes to prevent trafficking in persons.
- The need to ensure that all child victims of trafficking have access to adequate procedures to seek compensation for damages from those legally responsible.
- The need to strengthen international, multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation to prevent, detect, investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible for acts involving the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and child sex tourism. States Parties are also called on to promote international cooperation and coordination between their authorities, national and international non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

States Parties to the CRC Protocol commit themselves to submit a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child within two years of the Protocol's entry into force, and subsequently, every five years, to identify measures adopted to give effect to the Protocol and to monitor the progress achieved.

☐ 1.2 CONVERGING STRATEGIES IN WEST AFRICA

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has become increasingly concerned about the protection of children and organized a meeting of experts from Member States on trafficking in persons in Accra, Ghana in October, 2001.

A **Declaration and a Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons** (2002–2003) were adopted during the annual ECOWAS Summit held in Dakar in December 2001. These call for speedy signature and ratification of the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) and the Protocol to the CRC. Member States are to take specific measures, including criminalization of trafficking in persons, protection and support for victims, promotion of awareness raising activities, cooperation between border control agencies, sharing of data collection between ECOWAS countries and the UN.

The establishment of National Task Forces, due to be created by June 2002, will enhance national capacity to coordinate the development of policies against trafficking. A Coordination Unit will be established within the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to liaise with National Task Forces and monitor and coordinate efforts against trafficking in persons at the sub-regional level.

Under the ECOWAS Plan of Action, Member States will set up direct communication between their border control agencies and expand efforts to gather data on human trafficking. New research will study the means and methods used, as well as the situation, magnitude, nature and economics of trafficking in human beings, particularly of women and children. The information gatheted will be shared between all ECOWAS countries and between the different UN agencies. The Plan of Action calls for standardized formats for collection of information by December 2002, with the full involvement of such international structures as INTERPOL and the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP).

The ECOWAS Declaration and Plan of Action have the potential to boost regional

cooperation on trafficking at the highest political level. It is important that these efforts be coordinated with an ongoing regional process and with other concerned UN bodies such as UNICEF, ILO and IOM.

The **Libreville 2000 Common Platform for Action** is the result of intensive advocacy by UNICEF at the national and sub-regional levels. It builds on growing cooperation between UNICEF and ILO on national and regional efforts to address child trafficking. In 1998, the two agencies organized a workshop on this issue in Cotonou, Benin, generating a new awareness of the problem and encouraging research and action at national level. Two years later, in February 2000, UNICEF and ILO organized a sub-regional Consultation on strategies to fight child trafficking in West and Central Africa in Libreville, Gabon.

The sheer number, variety and seniority of participants at Libreville 2000 added value to the Common Platform for Action that was adopted. The participation of ministerial-level representatives from eight countries, often from the social affairs ministries, gave it high level political endorsement. It was the beginning of a regional process with serious political and strategic implications.

The Libreville Consultation helped to shape a common perception of trafficking – a pre-requisite for institutional cooperation at national and regional levels and the first step towards a common strategy. It emphasized the abusive and illicit nature of child trafficking and suggested a holistic approach towards the victims, their situation and the whole range of exploitative practices that they face. Above all, the Libreville Consultation stressed the need for close collaboration between countries and institutions on this issue.

The Libreville Platform for Action proposes seven strategies to prevent child trafficking and to ensure the effective protection its victims – an area that can be problematic. These strategies require action at various levels and by a range of institutions:

1. Advocacy and awareness-raising efforts to reinforce social regulation mechanisms within communities.
2. Establishment of an appropriate legal and institutional framework.
3. Improved care for child-trafficking victims.
4. Enhanced knowledge about, and monitoring of, child trafficking through de-centralized and flexible mechanisms.
5. Strengthening of cooperation between governments of different countries.
6. Strengthening of cooperation between government ministries.
7. Ensuring implementation and follow-up.

While it gives no details on specific roles for Governments, NGOs and international organizations, it emphasizes that they have responsibilities in their traditional areas of expertise.

The main responsibility for combating child trafficking lies with national governments through the development of National Plans of Action.[6] These should establish the necessary repatriation procedures and law enforcement cooperation agreements, which, in turn, require bilateral cooperation and coordination.

The Platform recognizes the role of non-governmental organizations in preventing trafficking, but even more so in protecting children who have been trafficked to support their recovery and reintegration. NGOs also have a role in capacity building to empower communities in awareness raising, monitoring, and participation in research and data collection.

The involvement of communities is identified as one of the main pillars of prevention and requires the establishment and reinforcement of community structures for awareness raising and monitoring activities alongside local authorities.

Finally, Libreville calls on international organizations to coordinate activities to support the development and implementation of national policies against child trafficking, collecting, disseminating and sharing information among countries and institutions, as well as establishing monitoring systems.

13

[6] Libreville 2000 does not define the sharing of responsibilities between countries of origin and countries of destination. Bilateral agreements will be required for that purpose.

2. FROM PERCEPTIONS TO RESPONSES

Before the Libreville Consultation in 2000, policy efforts on child trafficking were hampered by the low level of awareness on this issue at national level. Actions were sporadic and uncoordinated and were further undermined by the lack of qualitative data on child trafficking flows, on the causes and purposes of trafficking, on its destinations and on the conditions in which children lived and worked. The near total absence of data prevented media coverage – an essential ingredient in influencing public opinion. There was little or no intercountry dialogue, partly as a result of a failure to grasp the trans-border nature of trafficking and the origin/transit/destination chain.

☐ 2.1 PERCEPTIONS DIFFER FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY

Perceptions of child trafficking depend, to a large extent, on whether a country is a country of origin, transit or destination. The resulting perceptions can dominate policies and programmes, even though trafficking violates the rights of children at every stage in the chain: the removal of children from their family environment; their transportation and arrival in another country; as well as the intolerable conditions in which they find themselves living and working.

Countries of origin have, traditionally, been more aware of child trafficking. The very first national approach on trafficking was developed by a country of origin – Mali – after NGOs presented the Government with evidence of the trafficking of Malian children to Côte d'Ivoire in 1995. Benin was also aware of the trafficking issue at an early stage and there was swift recognition of its trans-border character, particularly by NGOs. In other countries, such as Togo, awareness has increased slowly and has had no significant impact on policy. In Burkina Faso, low awareness of trafficking is exacerbated by poor information and by superficial media coverage of the issue.

Transit countries are more likely to perceive trafficking as a non-national issue and this is a major obstacle to the control of national borders and coastlines. The response of the Cameroon authorities to the Etireno 'slave boat' scandal was to deny 'authorization to call' – illustrating the difficulties in persuading Governments to acknowledge accountability for children within their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality.

Countries of destination tend to show some indifference, as the problem originated in another country and does not concern their own children. However, they are being held increasingly accountable by international media and others as the venues for exploitation, and are being pushed to introduce effective protection and repatriation measures. Indeed, policy developments in these countries have often stemmed from international pressure. One example is the growing media interest in child labour in the plantations of Côte d'Ivoire. Here, and in Gabon, international media pressure is pushing Governments to take a stand on an issue generally seen as a foreign issue related to the countries of origin. Public opinion and policy makers in countries of destination tend to see child trafficking as clandestine migration organized by foreigners – an alien phenomenon that should not divert political attention from the needs of national children.

Whether in countries of origin, transit or destination child trafficking is rarely understood as a trans-border phenomenon with

direct implications for State accountability and intercountry cooperation. Governments tend to transfer the responsibility for the flows of trafficked children to neighbouring countries and there is little analysis of the intercountry 'cause and effect' patterns that contribute to the steady growth of this phenomenon.

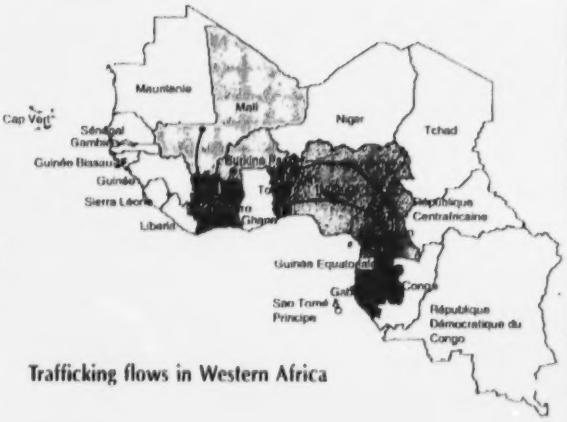
This political misperception has direct implications for children. The few interventions already in place are not designed in a

Trafficking flows

Countries are divided into two groups according to the trafficking flows that are known to link them. The first trafficking flow analyzed in the research was from Mali and Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire. The second was from Togo and Benin, through transit countries such as Cameroon and Nigeria to oil-rich Gabon.

Child trafficking in the region stems from unequal development and rides on the back of migratory practices that have existed for centuries. It is closely related to and reflects many of the economic and social difficulties in West and Central Africa.

There is also migration between countries of origin that may, or may not, include child trafficking.[7] And all countries in the region experience the internal trafficking of children from rural to urban areas for exploitative purposes.



Trafficking flows in Western Africa

[7] There are seasonal migrations of young rural inhabitants: Malian girls head for the two largest towns in Burkina Faso to seek employment as domestic workers or in the informal sector, to earn money for their marriage trousseau, while boys from Burkina Faso go to the rice plantations in Mali during the harvest and planting season.

Human Development Indicators

	Mali	Burkina Faso	Côte d'Ivoire
HDI rank	153	159	144
Adult literacy rate (age 15 and above)	39.8%	23.0%	45.7%
Gross enrolment ratio	28.0%	23.0%	38.0%
GDP per capita (PPP)	753 USD	965 USD	1654 USD
Population living on less than 1 dollar a day	72.8%	61.2%	12.3%
Underweight children under 5 years	40.0%	36.0%	24.0%

	Togo	Benin	Gabon
HDI rank	128	147	109
Adult literacy rate (age 15 and above)	56.3%	39.0%	63.0%
Gross enrolment ratio	62.0%	45.0%	86.0%
Gdp per capita (PPP)	1,410 USD	933USD	6.027
Population with less than 1 dollar a day	n.a.	n.a..	...
Underweight children under 5 years	25.0%	29.0%	...

Source HDI 2001, UNDP

Countries of origin have poverty rates that are among the highest in West and Central Africa. Inequalities are increasing and standards of living continue to decline. The vulnerability of children to child trafficking is exacerbated by failing educational systems.

Countries of destination: Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon enjoy comparatively prosperous and stable economic and social conditions, making them poles of attraction for child trafficking in West and Central Africa.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

proper context and fail to take account of the situation in neighbouring countries. With such an approach, resources are wasted and minimal impact is achieved.

2.2 CHILD TRAFFICKING, CHILD LABOUR AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

It is important to recognize child trafficking as a complex protection issue including the removal of a child from his or her family environment, the child's transportation, illegal reception or sale, and placement into an exploitative context.

The research reveals a widespread perception of child trafficking solely as a child labour phenomenon. But trafficking violates the rights of children long before their actual labour begins. First, there is the separation of a child from his or her home. Then there is the time spent in the so-called 'care' of the traffickers while the child is transported to the eventual workplace – a process that presents its own dangers and abuses. Then, there is the illegal reception or sale of the child and, ultimately, the child's final destination.

For this reason it is important to consider to what extent the approaches taken to child labour in general are appropriate and/or sufficient to child trafficking, where and how new methodologies might be applied and whether existing guidelines and frameworks need modification.[8]

Trafficking is often associated with clandestine migration, but the merging of these two issues can have serious consequences, with trafficked children seen as young offenders rather than victims in need of special protection measures. As a result, they often come into conflict with police and judicial authorities and may even be deprived of their liberty.

Whether child trafficking is regarded as a child labour issue, an illegal migration issue, or a juvenile justice issue, there is, in every case, a tendency to overlook the underlying economic and cultural factors behind trafficking, thereby placing the trafficked child somewhere in a vast pool of 'social deviance'. There is little perception that trafficking is, first and foremost, a violation of human rights – particularly the right of the child to be protected from any form of economic exploitation, to preserve family relations and to grow up in a nurturing family environment.

2.3 THE MEDIA FACTOR

Trafficking is often perceived as an emergency issue, rather than a situation linked to long-term development. It is often presented in terms of sudden crises, such as the Etireno incident, when the world's media focused on the mystery surrounding a ship believed to be full of trafficked children off the coast of West Africa. It is rarely presented as a continuous problem with deep socio-economic and cultural roots. This can skew responses.

The media has turned its attention to child trafficking in recent years, and has a crucial role to play in creating awareness of this phenomenon and in promoting respect for children's rights. In relation to West Africa, the media often run sensational, one-off stories focusing on the 'slavery' angle. The lack of tangible and accurate information on the child trafficking phenomenon undermines the possibility of a more in-depth media approach that includes its causes and complexities.

The current media focus can divert policy approaches away from measures to address the root causes of the problem, towards small-scale, short-term initiatives.

2.4 HETEROGENOUS POLICY RESPONSES

Different perceptions of child trafficking, combined with the different socio-economic situations in each country and the varying levels of political awareness, have created a heterogenous mix of policy responses in West and Central Africa. The rapid increase in the number of actors involved in this issue, and their often contrasting approaches, only add to the complexity of the current scenario.

Child trafficking is a phenomenon that, by

[8] This was also one of the recommendations of an independent evaluation of ILO-IPEC programmes on child trafficking, "Action against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children," ILO Geneva, June 2001.

its very nature, establishes patterns of cause and effect among countries of origin, transit and destination. It is worth exploring, therefore, the causes of continued heterogeneity and asymmetry of policy responses within the region.

2.4.1 Intercountry cooperation requires intercountry institutional symmetry

This means having relevant ministries dealing with child trafficking in a similar manner across a number of countries, with complementary mandates, accountabilities, policies and approaches. Institutional symmetry is essential wherever two or more countries are linked by the same trafficking flow, to develop effective, integrated and coordinated policy responses.

In general, there are major differences between the approaches found in countries of origin and destination.

Countries of origin: Trafficking is generally the domain of the Ministry of Social Affairs[9] (Women or Family Affairs) or the Ministry of Labour. The former would normally cover the entire spectrum of child welfare, and child rights would be an important dimension of their conceptual framework. The latter would tend to focus on trafficking as a labour issue. While a Ministry of Labour can be more technical and targeted in its approach, its entry point to the issue is narrower and does not cover the various aspects of child trafficking.

Countries of destination: In Côte d'Ivoire there is clear leadership by the Ministry of Family, Woman and Child with a strong advo-

[9] The denomination of the 'Social Ministry' may differ from one country to another. This text uses the general term Ministry of Social Affairs, to distinguish this from the Ministry of Labour.

Three National Plans of Action under development

Burkina Faso *(at project stage). Priorities will include:*
- Improving the level of knowledge about child trafficking for labour purposes;
- Informing, sensitizing and mobilizing partners;
- Setting up a proper legal framework;
- Strengthening the intervention capacity of concerned structures;
- Setting up prevention and reintegration programmes;
- Follow-up and implementation of the plan.

Cameroon *(draft plan on child labour being amended to include child trafficking). Priorities will include:*
- Sensitization (prevention) activities to operationalise an inter-ministerial unit, training of resource persons, advocacy campaigns, and education on responsible parenthood;
- Judicial / legal protection;
- Recuperation and rehabilitation of trafficked children;
- Reinforcement of cross border control and international cooperation;
- Coordination of actions and follow-up.

Côte d'Ivoire *(draft). Overall priorities include:*
- Advocacy with government authorities and opinion leaders;
- Prevention through awareness campaigns and stronger border controls;
- Strengthening the legal and judicial framework;
- Strengthening inter-governmental cooperation;
- Protection: improving care for children who have been trafficked.

The draft NPA includes preventive measures against internal trafficking:
- Developing and implementing a micro-loan system to assist vulnerable groups;
- Providing quality education, free of charge, to all children under 15;
- Identifying the economic potential in supplier areas and helping local people tap into it;
- Basic literacy campaigns in at-risk areas.

Two immediate priorities:
- The creation of a *Brigade de Mineurs* in every regional capital;
- The establishment of a National Observatory on Child Labour and Child Trafficking.

cacy role from the Government, while in Gabon there is no clear ministerial division of responsibility as yet. In these countries, the issue is perceived, in general, as a security and criminal phenomenon, with causes, solutions and responsibilities that lie elsewhere – in the countries of origin. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs, therefore, play important roles in responses in countries of destination.

The comparative analysis of the eight countries reveals the need for greater intercountry dialogue and an increased institutional symmetry. The multiplication of national coordination bodies and mechanisms on trafficking risks fragmentation of available resources and an undermining of their own legitimacy.

2.4.2 National Plans of Action and Intercountry Cooperation Agreements.

While it may not be possible to identify one ideal pattern for policy intervention, it is possible to pinpoint two essential elements: the National Plan of Action and the Intercountry Cooperation Agreement. These two starting points require different policy approaches, with different implications for programmes on the ground. Which should come first?

Starting with a National Plan of Action (NPA) is an approach with strong advantages. It builds on national realities, is comparatively simple to implement and may have an immediate impact. It can create real understanding of the national trafficking 'picture' and can ensure the comprehensive action needed to address its underlying causes while assisting its victims. Ideally, all relevant national organizations should be involved in the resulting interventions, according to their specific strengths and range of action.

The risk is that such an approach might overlook the intercountry dimension. Neighbouring governments would not necessarily be involved, ruling out any parallel action on the causes or on interlinked trafficking flows. A national intervention based only on a NPA may show positive short-term effects, but the long-term lack of bilateral and multilateral coherence may become a constraint to more effective and permanent solutions. It will not, for example, address the need for intercountry institutional symmetry.

Indeed, this approach will complicate

National Plans of Action against Trafficking in West and Central Africa

COUNTRY	PLAN	STATUS
BENIN	None	
BURKINA FASO	Draft National Plan against Child Trafficking	Under discussion.
CAMEROON	Draft National Plan to Fight against Child Labour	ELABORATED 1997, being amended to integrate child trafficking.
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	National Plan to Fight against Child Trafficking	ELABORATED April 2000, not yet operational.
GABON	Draft National Plan to Fight against Child Labour	
MALI	National Emergency Plan to Fight against Child Trafficking	ADOPTED 24 March 2000.
NIGERIA	National Plan of Action for Combating Child Labour	ELABORATED 2000, not yet operational.
TOGO	National Plan to Fight against Child Labour and Child Trafficking in Togo (plus two other National Plans created at different times)	ELABORATED December 2000, not yet operational.

Source: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

efforts to develop an Intercountry Cooperation Agreement. The NPA tailored to national realities would have its own implementation methods – methods that might not be fully compatible with intercountry coordination. The development of an Intercountry Cooperation Agreement may require a country to go 'back to the drawing board' to harmonize its approaches and practices with its neighbours.

Only one country – Mali – has adopted a National Plan of Action to fight child trafficking. Two countries, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, have draft NPAs specifically for child trafficking. Three countries, Cameroon, Gabon and Nigeria, have draft plans as components of Action against Child Labour. One country, Benin, has no NPA.

Mali's National Plan of Action against Child Trafficking is the most significant national policy document in the sub-region at present – the first NPA to be officially adopted on this issue and one that could be considered as a reference for other countries.

Coordination, either between the countries linked by trafficking flows or between NPAs, is a major challenge. Prevention and reintegration plans in countries of origin, for example, need to integrate protection and repatriation plans that are linked to those in countries of transit and destination. At the same time, approaches in transit countries should be more oriented toward strengthening monitoring mechanisms, border controls and trafficking interceptions.

Starting with an Intercountry Cooperation Agreement can provide coherence in bilateral or multi-country strategies. It can ensure the inclusion of prevention and reintegration measures in countries of origin with the protection

The Mali National Plan of Action to Combact Child Trafficking[10]

Mali's National Plan of Action to Combat Child Trafficking (Plan National d'urgence de lutte contre le trafic d'enfants) dates back to a national workshop in Bamako in March 2000. It aims to establish legal, administrative and preventive measures against trafficking with strategies that respond to the priorities identified by the actors already working on this issue.

Activities:

- Establishing **Cooperation Agreements** – a pre-requisite for the proper repatriation of children.
- **Identifying locations** where trafficked children are working and organizing their repatriation.
- **Establishing reception and transit facilities** to ensure proper care for children.
- **Raising awareness** of the general public, particularly those living in the areas concerned.
- **Education and vocational guidance/training** for trafficked children.
- **Building professional skills** and providing training for the staff of implementing partners, including training in child psychology and listening skills.
- **The adoption of laws and regulations against trafficking.** It is essential to strengthen existing legal and judicial provisions to confront professional traffickers, who work on the basis of maximum profit and minimum risk.
- **Establishing a mechanism for coordination and monitoring.** Structures will be created to bring together key actors in this area, ensuring the coordination and monitoring of their activities.

Committees and technical units to monitor implementation have been established at national, provincial and local level. These generally include representatives from government, technical and financial partners, national and international NGOs, the consular services and other diplomatic representations. In the Sikasso region, for example, a consultative committee has been established, including representatives of Provincial Government departments, civil society and the transport workers' union, and directed by a steering unit headed by the High Commissioner (the administrative Governor of the Province).

[10] Diarra, S.O., Recherche sur l'élaboration de stratégies pour abolir le trafic des enfants à des fins d'exploitation économique en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre, Country Report, IRC-WCARO January 2001.

and repatriation measures in countries of destination. The resulting NPAs and programmes would be based on an agreed framework, with more chance of having an impact on all the links in the trafficking chain. Institutional symmetry would be facilitated, as this would be a pre-requisite for any such Agreement. This approach is a more logical response to child trafficking as an intercountry issue.

It does, however, have one major disadvantage. Its impact, while more intense, will not be felt in the short-term. And it will be totally dependent on intercountry dialogue and political will, as well as clear and effective implementation mechanisms. The difficulties in ensuring international cooperation are well known and become aggravated in times of political instability. Political upheaval and continuous changes in leadership can lead to repeated changes in the structures of national governance and can slow, or even freeze, the development of coherent social policies and intercountry cooperation.

The most sensitive policy step is not the Agreement itself, but the need to ensure synchronization of its implementation process. Prevention and rehabilitation measures in the countries of origin, for example, would have to be carefully coordinated and harmonized with measures for protection and repatriation in the countries of destination.

There is only one bilateral agreement on child trafficking in the sub-region at present: the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire and the Republic of Mali.

The importance of synchronization of national plans is well illustrated by difficulties in the development of measures to reintegrate Malian children returned from Côte d'Ivoire, stemming from the lack of identification measures in the Ivorian plantations and the absence of a Plan of Action in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Cooperation Agreement between Mali and Côte d'Ivoire

On 1 September 2000, the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali signed a Cooperation Agreement on Combating Trans-border Trafficking of Children. This groundbreaking agreement, signed under the aegis of UNICEF and in the presence of NGOs combating trafficking, is the first in West and Central Africa to establish formal procedures for cooperation against child trafficking between two States.

It is built on two principles: the **best interests of the child** in all circumstances, in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and **the definition of minimum standards**, with each State free to go beyond the obligations listed to combat child trafficking. Its recognition of all those under the age of 18 as children is in line with the CRC.

It uses a broad definition of child trafficking as: *"the entire process whereby a child is displaced inside or outside a country under circumstances which transform him or her into a marketable commodity for at least one of the attendant adults whatever the purpose of the displacement of the child; any act involving the recruitment, transportation, receipt or sale of a child; any act causing the displacement of a child inside or outside a country".*

The Agreement is based on complementary responsibility and two types of common obligations are established: parallel measures and strategies to be implemented at national level, and actions to be undertaken jointly.

- **The country of origin** has the obligation to prevent the trafficking and to ensure re-integration of child-trafficking victims in their communities of origin and in their families.
- **The country of destination** has to protect child-trafficking victims, without discrimination, by ensuring that they receive the care they need and that they are repatriated and ensure full rehabilitation of child-trafficking victims by recognizing their right to compensation.
- **Monitoring and research.** Countries have to document and monitor child-trafficking practices within their national territory and organize and facilitate the repatriation of children within national territory in association with other bodies.
- **Joint funding.** The financial burden for repatriations must be shared by the States according to mechanisms to be arranged.

3. THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL POLICY RESPONSES IN WEST AFRICA

This thematic analysis of the eight countries examines two main areas of action: prevention and protection. It looks at current practice, identifies policy gaps and overlaps that need to be addressed, and highlights innovative practices. While there has been little evaluation of these to date, their impact identifies them as practices that should be assessed for replication.

☐ 3.1 PREVENTION

Comparative analysis in the eight countries shows that most government and NGO activity on child trafficking is prevention oriented. This is welcomed, as trafficking is partly due to deep-rooted cultural practices and the lack of awareness among families about the risks of allowing their children to leave home. The research finds that, in some cases, there is a tradition of placing children with other, often richer, families on the basis of mutual solidarity. But in the face of weakening family ties, solidarity mechanisms can become entry points for child trafficking. Families may be unaware of the new dangers that lie behind an old practice.

A recent study undertaken in Benin, for example, shows that the lack of family knowledge about the realities of life in neighbouring countries was a major factor in trafficking.[11]

There is an overall recognition in all countries and by all relevant actors, of the importance of prevention as the first priority in a comprehensive strategy of action. Awareness-raising initiatives predominate among the prevention approaches of governments and NGOs.

These initiatives focus, in general, on television or radio campaigns and community-based educational workshops. There are plans for an innovative approach in Benin to include the views of trafficked children in a kit that aims to change parental beliefs on the benefits of sending children away to work.

☐ 3.1.1 Prevention: impact of awareness raising campaigns

There are wide variations between the awareness-raising campaigns promoted in these eight countries and their overall impact in the region is limited by the lack of comprehensive national strategies on trafficking. They often target government officials or public opinion leaders, and rarely penetrate into rural areas or the marginalized communities at risk. Information remains sporadic, mainly journalistic and does little to educate families and children.

In Burkina Faso, for example, most media activity is limited to news coverage of sporadic events. The wider media structure is not mobilized to promote understanding of child trafficking and community-based organizations remain, in general, excluded from awareness raising activities. A similar situation is to be found in Nigeria, where the institutional government level is the only one to be reached by such campaigns.

In Cameroon, the action of the various NGOs working on prevention is limited by the lack of community alert systems and specific structures to receive or house trafficked children. There are, however, well-established organizations that could create such initiatives, such as the Emmanuel Foundation and SOS Enfant. A potential network exists and this

[11] Adihou, Alain, Le trafic des enfants entre le Benin et le Gabon, ESAM and Antislavery, Cotonou, July 1998.

Benin Village Committees to fight child trafficking

"There is no doubt that what we did has really had an effect. I was very active in discouraging any form of child placement. We tried everything we could – neighbourhood awareness, talking to parents, local networks – to curb the practice in the sub-prefecture of Ze. I have to admit that the result of my activities actually turned against me at one point. When my wife gave birth last year, I found it impossible to find a girl to live in with her to help her while also attending school."
Former Village Committee Member, Ze, Benin

As a result of joint research by UNICEF and the Government of Benin, together with the decentralization of activities against child trafficking, Benin's first Village Committees were created in August 1999 in the sub-prefectures of Ze, Dogbo and Agbangnizoun in the south of the country – the area most affected by child trafficking. There are now more than 170 committees carrying out a range of activities. Not all may be directly linked to child trafficking but, taken together, they are having an impact on the phenomenon. The Committees provide social surveillance of the movements of children in their villages by:

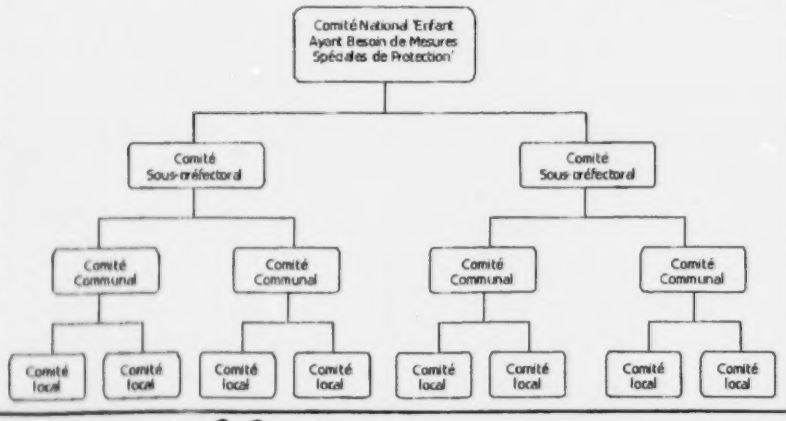
- Raising awareness
  - *of parents* on the importance of: giving birth in maternity wards, registering their children and collecting their children's birth certificates; school attendance and keeping their children in school; providing care and training for children with no formal schooling, such as apprenticeships;
  - *of the general population* on the problems of children who are trafficked or placed with other families;
  - *of young people* on their role and their rights in relation to child trafficking and other rights issues.
- Reporting cases
  - of sexual or other abuse of children;
  - of suspect or fraudulent departures of children;
  - of children exposed to placement or trafficking.
- Monitoring
  - the re-integration of trafficked children once they return to the village.

When a child leaves the village, the Committee carries out a rapid investigation and alerts the nearest gendarmerie unit or the Juvenile Protection Squad. In many cases, this has stopped the transportation of 'cargoes' of children to neighbouring countries.

Village Committees have the advantage of on-the-spot supervision, which encourages spontaneous monitoring of local children, an early warning system, and the division of tasks so that everyone involved has a full role. The Committees also provide efficient birth and death registers in the villages, keeping population information up to date. This allows better understanding of the current situation and the movements of children and compensates for ineffective official registry of births, marriages and deaths.

The Committees are part of a vertical structure that includes Sub-Prefectural Committees, but respond to the need for urgent action at the village level. They operate on a voluntary basis and are entirely dependent on the human resources available in the community. Their composition varies according to the size of the village and the extent of its trafficking problem, but membership generally ranges from three to six people, including the Village Head who acts as the Committee's public authority, ensuring communication with higher government structures.

There is cooperation and mutual assistance between Committees in the same sub-prefectures. Training courses are organized at sub-prefectural level by the Ministry for Social Protection, in cooperation with UNICEF, and those attending relay what they have learnt to other members.



could be the foundation for field structures and social, reception and orientation centres, as well as centres for women and young people.

There is a need for prevention approaches that go beyond awareness-raising to focus on development. There are, for example, no poverty reduction schemes to combat child trafficking in the sub-region other than micro credit schemes in Cameroon and Togo. The costs of awareness-raising activities may be lower than the costs of programmes for poverty reduction. They may be easier to manage and have an immediate impact, while poverty reduction schemes need long-term commitment and maintenance. However, the absence of systematic poverty eradication strategies and the lack of sustained efforts within prevention activities undermines the impact of the entire prevention arsenal.

3.1.2 Prevention: the challenge of monitoring borders

The control and monitoring of borders is crucial to ensure effective prevention, but policy responses in this area are complex. The borders of these eight countries are permeable and largely uncontrolled. In Burkina Faso and Cameroon, for example, historical cross-border migration and the close links between communities on either side of the border can make border control a technical impossibility.

These constraints are exacerbated by the scarce resources allocated at country level to border police, both in terms of personnel and materials such as vehicles and radio equipment. In all eight countries, interviews with border police reveal feelings of powerlessness due to lack of training and equipment and the absence of an effective penal framework to deter traffickers.

Efforts by individual countries can have only limited results if border controls are not functional. Effective border control requires intercountry coordination and cooperation.

The projected National Plan of Action for Burkina Faso, for example, will be based on intercountry cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral. As well as training for security and border officers, the NPA includes collaboration between the national police and Interpol to gather information on the issue of child trafficking.

Mali is planning to carry out data management on trafficking flows – an important instrumental step. In this plan, border police stations will work as data collection points on interceptions and repatriations, by completing forms on each child. A focal point at the Ministerial level will consolidate the resulting data so that it can be shared with other partners. This approach will depend on wide networking and systematic monitoring of the borders.

Mali, Togo and Benin have cited the preventive value of the travel authorizations that

Transport unions in Mali as allies against trafficking

Traffickers in Mali generally use mini-buses or large trucks to transport children and studies show that many traffickers and intermediaries are either drivers or transport leasers. Some are thought to be members of transport workers' unions. Indeed, some traffickers appear to have created transport unions.

The National Plan of Action therefore stresses the role of transport workers' unions in trafficking control and surveillance — a role that is not yet being fulfilled. Combating trafficking requires that those working in the transport sector realize the seriousness of trafficking as a criminal offence.

The Malian unions have been directly involved in the negotiations to draw up activities to combat trafficking and are affiliated with other unions in neighbouring countries. But delays in the start-up of planned activities have prevented the unions from carrying out the role expected of them.

The chaos and disorganization that reign in the transport sector will make it very difficult to develop effective action and it could be argued that a complete re-organization of the transport sector would be required, as well as the education of transport workers on the rights of children, before unions could become full partners in the fight against trafficking.

However, trade unions are direct stakeholders in the child trafficking issue in the region and they could become valuable partners in its eradication. This is an area for urgent action.

must be issued by a local authority before a child can travel.

The most significant example of community-based border monitoring in the sub-region is the Village Committee initiative in Benin which has potential for replication. Burkina Faso and Togo are now developing similar methodologies.

In Burkina Faso, plans are underway to establish Village Committees along the lines of those in Benin. The Committees are seen as a way to involve important local actors in the fight against child trafficking, such as administrative and religious authorities, local associations and NGOs, and the unions of bus and truck drivers. The mandate of the planned Committees will be to raise awareness on child trafficking and strengthen local capacity for its prevention.

In Togo, a scheme is being developed for Focal Points within Village Development Committees to monitor what is happening within their territory. This could feed into a wider scheme, modelled on the experience of Benin to build a bilateral strategy of border monitoring.

The core of the prevention approach in Côte d'Ivoire is based almost exclusively on the control of migration flows and awareness-raising in border areas. This strategy will now focus on the establishment and involvement of local committees along the border and near child labour sites.

Another promising initiative is found in Mali, where bus drivers are helping to monitor the flow of children in the border area with Côte d'Ivoire.

3.1.3. Prevention: education as a key measure

Education emerges as the weakest component of current preventive strategies in the region. Most of the countries report no current or planned interventions in this area. This is a significant problem, given that trafficking thrives on misperceptions and lack of opportunity.

Cameroon and Togo are two exceptions, with various institutions focusing on formal

Micro-credit project in Togo: loans for education

The Education Loan Programme in Togo pools the efforts of those carrying out income generating activities and contributes to community development. Launched in 1998 in the Prefectures of Le Golfe and Wawa – those thought to have the greatest exposure to child trafficking – the programme was developed in cooperation with the Presbyterian Evangelical Church of Togo and the Fédération des Unions Coopératives d'Epargne et de Crédit (Federation of Cooperative Savings and Loan Unions – FUCEC) as part of a larger programme to combat the worst forms of child labour.

The aim was to provide small loans to 50 women for income-generating activities, reducing the need to send children away to earn an income, and therefore boosting the chance that children would go to school. The women were formed into small informal 'solidarity groups', and each member received an individual loan after 15 days of training on management techniques. Loans were granted to families of children who had been trafficked, or families thought to be at risk, often on the basis of information from village heads or priests and ministers.

The initiative resulted in major changes for the families concerned. Their children now go to school or learn a trade, rather than, as before, working as domestic servants either in Togo or other countries.

The initial target was soon exceeded. From an initial budget of one million francs (US$1,310) to provide loans for 50 women in 1997, it now has a working capital of 50 million francs (US$65,500) to assist 800 mothers. Families of child-trafficking victims, or the victims themselves if they are girls aged 15 to 18, can now request loans of up to 300,000 francs (US$383), increased from a maximum of 75,000 francs (US$100) when the initiative began.

This project shows that limited resources combined with good cooperation among the partners, individuals and communities involved, can achieve real progress, including:

- keeping children in their communities by making people self-sufficient;
- financial self-sufficiency and support of parents during a transitional period;
- rapid diversification of the income-generating activities carried out.

In view of such success, it is unfortunate that there has been no proper follow-up to these activities to see if they can be replicated and enhanced.

Micro-credit project in Cameroon

In Cameroon, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides micro credits to finance income generating activities for women in particular provinces – a project that has helped to curb child abuse, trafficking and exploitation and has improved living conditions for children and women. The project is carried out in the northern and western provinces where children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and targets underlying problems such as poverty, low school enrolment, harmful traditional practices, high fertility rates, large families and irresponsible parenthood.

The project comes under a framework of country programmes executed in collaboration with UNFPA, UNDP and the African Development Bank (ADB). It began in May 1988 with funding from the first Country Programme of assistance to population issues by UNFPA (1987-1990). An evaluation of the pilot phase revealed the value of supporting women in socio-economic activities through micro-credit projects.

The project began alongside a project on responsible parenthood in the Far North and South-West provinces which aimed to boost the status of women by:

- training 1,500 women leaders in responsible parenthood and management of micro-credits through seminars, clubs, radio/TV information and workshops;
- providing technical and financial support to 40 micro-credit income generating projects;
- creating and funding community pharmacies;
- researching the impact of tradition on women (and girls) in the Northern Provinces.

Women could apply for loans as individuals, in groups or as members of NGOs. The process began with training on the management of projects, with sessions also used to provide education on responsible parenthood.

The emphasis was on participation, with women involved in the development of every aspect of the project. A revolving fund helped to ensure sustainability, involving local financial structures such as "tontines", cooperatives, financial NGOs and so on. Funds were managed by local NGOs that would ensure the distribution and recovery of loans under the coordination of the then MINASCOF (the former Ministry of Social and Women's Affairs, now the Ministry of Women's Affairs).

Groups applying for loans had to be registered with MINCOF and had to present concrete proposals or have income generating activities already underway. Loans were allocated on the basis of a case-by-case feasibility study of the existing or proposed commercial activity, and were subject to stringent conditions. They were available only to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged women, who required sureties from a group of women and a fixed residence in the area. The loans could only be used to improve family living conditions and expand their commercial activities. Loans ranged from CFA 50.000 (US$65) to CFA 1.000.000 (US$1,300) and were given for a maximum period of 12 months at a very low annual rate of interest.

Book keeping was strict and all transactions were noted in specially prepared ledgers. Loans were signed out and recovered by individuals or the intermediary NGOs. Additional loans were only allocated on the basis of successful management of previous credits.

Radio and TV clubs were created to communicate useful background information in visual or local language formats, recognizing the high rate of illiteracy, especially in the Far North.

Follow-up and evaluation were carried out by MINASCOF (DPF/CEP) and UNFPA. The final evaluation of the project took place in June 1998[12] and revealed the project's impact. Almost all projects met or exceeded their targets, with a significant reimbursement rate of 76.5 per cent. There was remarkable improvement in the level of understanding of basic issues such as education, childcare and birth control and changes in attitudes to such issues were noted. The participatory approach of the project meant that all those involved had a stake in its success.

As a result, the project was carried over into UNFPA's third Country Programme, still ongoing. MINCOF's capacity to manage micro-credits and support income generating activities for women has expanded and the Ministry is now involved in many other similar projects in the field, including:

- The Global Programme for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality funded by UNDP in five provinces including the West and North West.
- The project on the Reduction of Poverty and Activities in Favour of Women in the Far North province, funded by the ADB, UNDP and the Government.
- The project funded by Canadian Cooperation to fight urban poverty in Douala and Yaounde.

[12] Tchamambe Djine, Louise, "Final Evaluation: women, population and development: promotion of women through education on population issues" MINASCOF (DPF/CEP) and UNFPA, June 1998, Cameroon

and non-formal education. In Cameroon, for example, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has an active informal education programme for girls in the Northern provinces, while the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sports use a network of social and youth centres to provide education on such issues as trafficking. National research shows that most of the children who are vulnerable to trafficking are from large families, so there is an emphasis on education for responsible parenthood. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has launched an initiative linking income generating activities for women, funded by UNFPA, with awareness raising sessions on parental responsibilities.

3.1.4 Prevention: some lessons learned

At present, awareness-raising is the dominant prevention strategy. While this is a key strategy, it cannot have a major impact without a solid foundation of structural measures, such as education programmes or income generating activities. These are scarce in the eight countries reviewed, representing a major weakness and a priority area for action. A wider preventive approach could, however, be created by replicating the positive examples of the Village Committees in Benin and the education-based programmes in Cameroon and Togo.

3.2 PROTECTION

The current system of protection and care of victims of child trafficking in West and Central Africa is generally inadequate in the face of the rapid spread of this phenomenon. Urgent action is needed. Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, for example – the two main countries of destination in the region – have not yet put in place relevant protection strategies. There are no measures to identify children in working sites and, when children are identified, there are no care measures such as psychological support. Children who are trafficked are generally seen as young offenders, rather than victims, and detained at police stations until they are repatriated. However, both countries have positive examples of action taken by external actors such as representatives from countries of origin and associations of foreigners.

One country of origin – Mali – has established repatriation procedures with the help of major NGOs. Two drop-in centres have been created in the border town of Sikasso.[13] Between January and October 1999, 71 trafficked children were repatriated from Côte d'Ivoire. By the end of 2002, this number had risen to 531. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) plays an important role in this area, as part of its programme of assistance to returned children, carried out in close collaboration with UNICEF.

In Cameroon, the lack of any bilateral agreement with neighbouring countries, coupled with the lack of data, also means the lack of a system of repatriation, although ad-hoc repatriations are known to take place.

NGOs play an increasingly important role in repatriation. In Benin, for example, they receive children who have been repatriated or intercepted by the *Brigade de Mineurs*. However, the demand for spaces for children always outstrips the supply – a situation that can represent a health risk for children in unhygienic, overcrowded conditions where children of different age groups are housed together.

In every country reviewed, the police are traditionally entrusted with the protection of children. In Benin, for example, they are responsible for intercepting children and handing them over to NGOs for their recovery and reintegration while traffickers are prosecuted. But their main protection tasks are to ensure control procedures at borders and provide rapid responses to children who are trafficked abroad.

3.2.1 Protection: strengthening the legal framework

Protection requires the enactment and enforcement of relevant legislation. The main legislative constraints in the eight countries reviewed are the lack of formal cooperation among states, the overall weakness of law enforcement and the fact that child trafficking is not properly addressed in national legisla-

[13] Run by Mali Enjeu and Save the Children Canada.

tion. Awareness-raising on this issue has not been accompanied by a parallel, and necessary, process of legal reform. The strengthening of the legal framework requires three factors:

1) Accelerated ratification of the key international instruments, particularly:
   - The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
   - The Palermo Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
   - ILO Convention 182;
   - The Hague Convention No. 34 of 19 October 1996 on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children.
2) Incorporation of international standards into national laws.
3) Development of a viable legal and institutional framework to ensure the effective enforcement of national legislation.

The need to strengthen the normative framework has stimulated debate on two main issues:

- Too few laws vs. too many laws. Strengthening the normative framework requires the ratification of relevant international Conventions and the enactment and implementation of appropriate laws, including laws that treat child trafficking as a criminal offence. Moreover, the current situation is seen as a legal vacuum. There are legal provisions scattered through various codes and laws that address the need to protect children's rights, but there is no comprehensive Children's Code or a Code on Child Protection that specifically defines situations of abuse, violence and vulnerability and the roles and responsibilities of different actors and institutions. This is a serious obstacle to the protection of children at risk. The current proliferation of laws is an indication that their enforcement is a real challenge.
- Incrimination of parents vs. protection of the family. The issue of the criminal responsibility of parents is often discussed. While parents are not regular accomplices in trafficking, they may not be completely ignorant of the risks faced by their children. Advocacy should not relieve parents of their responsibilities. At the same time, criminalizing parental conduct can have social and family implications that could undermine the very rights of children that these efforts are aiming to protect.

Concerns have also been raised about the need for further investment in the promotion of capacity building activities for the police and the judiciary to effectively address cases of child trafficking; in recognizing the legal safeguards for child trafficking victims and their right to redress and compensation.

3.2.2 Protection: the critical importance of repatriation

Repatriation is another sensitive area, requiring careful analysis and technical review. Concerns have been raised about the emphasis on repatriation as the first measure for children who have been trafficked and identified. Indeed, countries of destination rarely contemplate alternatives to repatriation.

It is important to consider the limits of repatriation measures and to ensure that repatriation is in the best interests of the individual child. It should not be seen as the only possible solution, especially if that child is already an adolescent who has broken all ties with his or her original community after years away from home.

The response should, in fact, be tailored to the specific needs and situation of the individual child. It is important to ensure that children take part in the decisions that affect them and can have contact with their families.

The debate around repatriation is a reminder of the sensitivity of the trafficking issue. It underlines the need for great care in the planning of measures before they are implemented, to ensure that they are guided by the best interests of the child, safeguard the rights of the child and take into account the child's particular needs.

4. UNICEF POLICY AND PROGRAMMING ON CHILD TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), together with other relevant international standards, constitute the normative framework for UNICEF efforts against child trafficking. The adoption of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in May 2000 paves the way for more targeted efforts in this area.

The UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan for 2002-2005 (MTSP) identifies five organizational priorities:

- Girls' education
- Integrated early childhood development
- Immunization 'plus'
- Fighting HIV/AIDS
- Increased protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

Within the latter, child trafficking is seen as a major area of concern, requiring deep-rooted behavioural change.

UNICEF has been working on the issue of child trafficking in West and Central Africa since 1998.[14] It has promoted advocacy at the highest international and regional levels. At country level, UNICEF supports the integration of trafficking into current policy areas and the development of National Plans of Action against this phenomenon.

The regional strategy against child trafficking has four main thrusts:

- Advocacy
- Improving knowledge and information sharing
- Strengthening international cooperation
- Enhancing internal capacity building.

The UNICEF Regional Office has supported high-level meetings that have helped to put child trafficking on the sub-regional agenda.[15] It advocates for the ratification of all of the major international treaties on this issue and has disseminated the Libreville Common Platform among governments, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), international organizations, NGOs and the media. Since 2000 it has worked in partnership with the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, to carry out research into policy and programme responses to child trafficking in the sub-region – as outlined in this study.

UNICEF has incorporated child trafficking into its broader child protection projects, creating three entry points:

- as a specific issue in the area of protection;
- in programmes for information, awareness and advocacy on children's rights;
- in programmes or projects to combat child labour.

Initial activities in West Africa focused on programme activities for children trafficked for domestic work. Activities have now expanded to include children working in agriculture and the informal urban sector, with four strategic thrusts:

[14] Sub-regional workshop in Cotonou, Benin on the trafficking of children, particularly girls, for domestic service.
[15] Regional Ministerial Technical Workshop on the rights of children and women (Lomé, Togo, 2-5 May 2000); Annual meeting of National UNICEF Committees (Geneva, Switzerland, August 2000); Regional workshop on rights of adolescents to development and participation (Dakar, Senegal, 31 October-3 November 2000), Regional technical workshop on children's rights and the media (Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, April 2001), Pan-African Forum on Children (Cairo, Egypt, May 2001).

- advocacy and social mobilization;
- national capacity building;
- studies and research;
- educational rehabilitation and socio-economic re-integration of children.

A review of country approaches finds that child trafficking is being mainstreamed in a flexible manner according to national priorities.

In Benin, for example, the 1999-2003 UNICEF programme on Children in Need of Special Protection Measures (CNSPM) supports capacity building activities on the CRC, the completion of studies on children at risk and child workers, and advocacy for the creation of village monitoring committees and improved coordination between relevant players. The programme also includes indirect support for the recovery and reintegration of children through local NGOs, although this is not intended to act as a substitute for the desired government activity in this area.

The Governments of Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire are working with UNICEF to design new five-year Cooperation Programmes that will include segments on child trafficking.

In Gabon (2002-2006) child trafficking comes under UNICEF's Advocacy and Social Policies Development Programme, with a strategy based on awareness-raising, data collection and support for sub-regional agreements.

In Mali, UNICEF supports a National Emergency Plan to Combat Child Trafficking, adopted in March 2000. A National Monitoring Committee has been established under the leadership of the Ministry for the Family, comprising all government and non-governmental partners as well as UNICEF, ILO/IPEC and IOM.

In Nigeria, UNICEF helped to raise awareness of rapidly emerging cases of child trafficking with an early study on the issue, published in 1998,[16] and a broader study on the protection of children's rights.[17] The new Cooperation Programme for UNICEF in Nigeria (2003-2007) includes a Programme for Youth Protection and Participation, focusing on HIV/AIDS and the eradication of the worst forms of child labour, in particular trafficking and sexual exploitation. A community development programme may also include activities against child trafficking.

In Togo (2002-2006) child trafficking falls under the Community Capacity-building Programme, which empowers communities to take action on child protection problems, including child trafficking.

[16] UNICEF, *Child Trafficking in Nigeria's Southern Border Towns*, Lagos, 1998.

[17] UNICEF, *Child Protection in Nigeria: Summary of research findings on protection and violation of children's rights*, Lagos 1998.

5. A CALL FOR INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

Child trafficking falls under the mandate of two other international organizations that are active in the region: the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Both work in close and active collaboration with UNICEF. UNICEF also cooperates closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the main human rights mechanisms engaged in the prevention of child trafficking, particularly the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, who were associated with the research on which this study is based.

In addition, UNICEF collaborates with the United Nations Inter-Regional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP), to design a programme to combat trafficking in West Africa. This aims to strengthen institutional responses at the technical and political level, assess trafficking patterns at the regional and inter-regional levels, and conduct pilot programmes based on best practices.

5.1 UNICEF/IOM COLLABORATION IN THE REGION

The IOM Plan of Action for 2001–2003 includes various research programmes on international migrations and the flow of labour forces, as well as the concrete establishment of the Permanent Observatory of International Migration in West Africa. The technical expertise of IOM on the return and reintegration of women and children who have been trafficked, as well as its strong commitment to building partnerships, provide a solid foundation for an integrated participatory approach.

The UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa and the IOM Dakar Bureau adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in July 2000. This provides the framework for a partnership on the implementation of strategies and programmes to combat the trafficking of children and women, as well as a common strategy to tackle the recruitment of children into armed forces. Under the MOU, the two organizations will support the following activities:

- information campaigns to support the prevention of child trafficking;
- the implementation of an information, follow-up and database system;
- the assisted return of children who have been trafficked internally or trans-border;
- the reintegration and rehabilitation of these children.

Information exchange is highlighted in the Memorandum and the agencies commit themselves to share information on movements and children in West and Central Africa. It is hoped that the MOU will help to address the urgent need for an intercountry approach to child trafficking and greater political and technical dialogue to establish wider synergies. It is a concrete starting point for a detailed cooperation strategy. A parallel agreement between UNICEF and ILO has been recommended as the next step to ensure a comprehensive intervention strategy.

5.2 UNICEF/ILO COLLABORATION IN THE REGION

Cooperation between UNICEF and ILO on child trafficking in the region is increasing in response to growing concerns about the extent of child trafficking for labour purposes. Both agencies have the authority to act: UNICEF through its mandate on the protection of children's rights and ILO/IPEC through its mandate to combat the economic exploitation of children.

In 1998, the two agencies organized the Cotonou workshop on girl domestic workers. They worked together to organize Libreville 2000 – a major step forward in terms of political commitment to address this problem in the region. The follow-up activities culminated in March 2002 with the second sub-regional consultation of cross-border child trafficking (Libreville 2002).

The adoption of the Libreville Common Platform for Action generated informal cooperation between the Regional Offices of UNICEF and ILO/IPEC in its follow-up and there has been growing cooperation ever since, both internally and externally. This cooperation is founded on the complementarity between the CRC and its Optional Protocol, and Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

UNICEF and ILO/IPEC hold regular exchanges of information, meeting to discuss the development of knowledge on child trafficking, institutional mobilization and programming. They provide joint support to regional government initiatives. A strong partnership is further enhanced by the mutual support provided by each agency to any relevant workshop organized by the other agency.

To build on this cooperation and as part of the follow-up to Libreville, a regional Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa and the ILO/IPEC African Regional Office. The MOU aims to improve cooperation and synergy between the two agencies on child trafficking at the regional and national levels by:

- strengthening mechanisms for cooperation and information exchange between the two organizations;
- promoting the adoption of complementary approaches and strategies of action;
- establishing partnership with regional or sub-regional governmental agencies.

5.3 SPECIAL FORA FOR COOPERATION

There are two main fora for collaboration between UNICEF and ILO/IPEC activities on child trafficking: National Committees to combat child trafficking, and the cooperation framework within the United Nations system.

1) National Committees to combat child trafficking. These inter-ministerial committees aim to develop and implement national policies on child trafficking. Currently operating in Benin, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria and Togo, they provide some safeguard against duplication of efforts and can maximize the strengths of the relevant institutions in each country. UNICEF and ILO participate in these Committees, giving the two agencies high level official fora in which to discuss and coordinate activities.

Field presence of agencies in West Africa

UNICEF	IOM	ILO
1 regional office	1 mission with regional functions	1 regional office [19]
38 field offices[18]	9 country missions	4 area offices

[18] Offices in all 24 countries (Nigeria has 5 field offices, Niger 2, DRC 7).
[19] ILO has also 2 Multidisciplinary Advisory Teams in the Region (EMAC in Cameroon and EMAO in Côte d'Ivoire).

2) The cooperation framework of the UN System provided by the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The CCA, whereby various UN Agencies undertake a joint analysis of the national situation, can identify priority needs and adapt common monitoring indicators accordingly. It can be used as the basis for the UNDAF for the country, to ensure consistency between the programmes of the various agencies, with common goals and timetables, as well as inter-agency coordination mechanisms such as monthly meetings of agency directors and inter-agency thematic groups.

In the context of CCA/UNDAF, consideration is given to cross-cutting issues, such as poverty, the environment, governance, human rights and the promotion and protection of children's rights.

Togo, for example, identified child trafficking as one of the most serious risks for children in the Children's Rights section of its CCA, completed in July 2000. This section also highlighted the information gaps in this area and the lack of an agreed definition of trafficking.

In Benin, however, the Children's Rights section of the CCA (February 1999) addresses the situation of exploited and maltreated children as well as 'entrusted' children (*vidomégon*), although no specific reference is made to child trafficking. Similarly the CCA (2000) for Côte d'Ivoire, makes no mention of child-trafficking victims.

☐ 5.4 ALLIANCES IN PREVENTION

To avoid duplication of efforts and wasted resources, it is essential to build alliances in prevention that go beyond high-level agreements to address field-based action. This requires complementarity and synergy in prevention activities, both in geographical coverage and strategic consistency. There are a number of areas where this is already happening in West Africa.

Advocacy: both UNICEF and ILO carry out advocacy at the highest levels and are well known for their work in producing public information, media materials and targeted messages. UNICEF works to mobilize regional inter-governmental bodies and to promote advocacy at national level, while ILO/IPEC pursues the mobilization of national governments and social partners, such as trade unions and employers' associations. On awareness-raising campaigns, ILO/IPEC has long-standing experience in designing and disseminating information on standards. This expertise can be mobilized to formulate specific messages on child trafficking. UNICEF brings the child rights perspective to such messages and can use its network and presence in the field to help the messages reach their target audiences. Advocacy campaigns can ensure that best practices developed by NGOs and other partners, such as the European Union and ECOWAS, are shared and replicated.

Education: different players support education-based strategies on child trafficking. UNICEF, for example, prioritizes education as one of its main entry points on this issue. ILO/IPEC focuses on the social re-integration aspects of education through vocational training and income-generating activities for children who have been trafficked. NGOs have developed a variety of activities in this area, such as support for village schools.

Capacity building: both UNICEF and ILO support the creation of village committees to combat trafficking in countries of origin. In addition, UNICEF works with NGOs and institutions entrusted with social protection or early childhood development activities, such as schools and parents' associations, and ILO/IPEC focuses on the judiciary and on government services, particularly the legislative and police sectors.

☐ 5.5 COMPLEMENTARY IN ACTION

It is vital to ensure that complementarity in institutional mandates is reflected in activities on the ground for children.

Community-based approaches: a community-based approach to child trafficking is essential, given the clandestine nature of the problem and its links to such sensitive issues as cultural values and historic migratory traditions. Community capacity building should include community surveillance and awareness raising. It should empower communities and households to improve living conditions and ensure access to basic social services and, in turn, reducing their vulnerability to traffick-

ing. UNICEF has experience in community participation and organization, particularly in community development projects. ILO, meanwhile, is well placed to support household capacity building by supporting the micro-credit and income-generating activities that reduce vulnerability to trafficking.

The legal framework: ILO has long experience in establishing the appropriate legal framework with its acknowledged expertise in the development of relevant legislation and regulations to combat child labour. It is well placed to support legislative reform in this area and to enhance government capacity to ensure its enforcement. UNICEF is well placed to strengthen the legal protection of child-trafficking victims and to promote their rights before relevant government authorities. Efforts on child repatriation call for a collaborative approach, in order to coordinate the field intervention, ensure complementary geographical coverage and strategic consistency, and to promote the development of bilateral agreements to combat child trafficking.

Research: prevention and protection can be achieved only if there is a clear understanding of the characteristics of child trafficking, its root causes and its impact on the enjoyment of children's rights. There is a need to build stronger qualitative and quantitative knowledge on this issue and it is crucial, therefore, to create synergies and complementary action in all research activities: including the definition of a baseline, the monitoring and the impact evaluation process. This can be achieved by:

- strengthening and harmonizing research methodologies and data collection on child trafficking;
- enhancing collaboration between relevant research units within the international organizations that are involved in studying and monitoring child trafficking, such as the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre with its experience of child trafficking research, ILO SIMPOC with its track record in developing quantitative analysis of child labour, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its Research and Right to Development Branch, and UNICRI;
- supporting the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of data on child trafficking at local level and building field research capacity.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

☐ GENERAL

- Increase understanding of child trafficking.
- Recognize child trafficking as a complex protection issue, which includes the removal, transportation, illegal reception or sale, and placement of the child into an exploitative context.
- Adopt a regionally shared and comprehensive definition of child trafficking, guided by the definition set out in the Palermo Protocol.
- Develop research on child trafficking and harmonize methodologies.
- Enhance inter-agency collaboration.

☐ REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure better dissemination and discussion of the content and policy recommendations of the Libreville Common Platform for Action and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Plan of Action.
- Recognize child trafficking as an intercountry issue that requires both regional and bilateral agreement and coordinated action.
- Ensure intercountry institutional symmetry as the basis for coherent and comprehensive strategies.

☐ NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ratification and effective implementation of relevant international conventions and protocols.
- Harmonization of national legislation with international standards.
- Establishment of inter-ministerial bodies as the main coordination mechanisms.
- Improvement in awareness raising activities and communication strategies.
- Recognition of education as a key preventive measure against child trafficking.
- Greater emphasis on capacity-building at every level, including communities.
- Enhance monitoring capacity.

REFERENCES

FERNANDEZ G., Étude sur les questions de protection spéciale de l'enfant dans les douze pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. UNICEF, Bureau Régional pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre, Abidjan, 12 janvier 1998.

ILO/IPEC, *Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa: synthesis report based on studies of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo.* ILO/IPEC, Geneva, September 2000.

ILO/IPEC / African Centre for Human Development, *Combating the trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa: Ghana Country Study.* Accra, April 2000.

ILO/IPEC / ANPPCAN, *Combating the trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa: child trafficking in Nigeria, the state of the art.* Lagos, April 2000.

NATIONS-UNIES, *Plan Cadre d'Assistance des Nations-Unies au Togo (2002-2006)*, Lomé, janvier 2001.

NATIONS-UNIES, *Bilan Commun de Pays : Togo*, Lomé, juillet 2000.

NATIONS-UNIES, *Cadre Commun d'Analyse Situationnelle du Bénin (CCA)*, Cotonou, février 2000.

NATIONS-UNIES, *Bilan Commun de Pays : Côte d'Ivoire.* (CCA/UNDAF), Abidjan, 2000.

OIT/IPEC, *Programme sous-régional de lutte contre le trafic d'enfants à des fins d'exploitation de leur travail en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre : Document de Programme, Phase II* , Genève, 2001 (extraits).

OIT/IPEC, *Combattre le trafic des enfants à des fins d'exploitation de leur travail en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre : Rapport de l'Atelier sous-régional*, Cotonou, 18-20 juillet 2000.

OIT/IPEC / Ministère de l'Emploi, du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale, *Etude relative au trafic des enfants à des fins d'exploitation de leur travail dans les pays d'Afrique occidentale et centrale : le cas du Burkina Faso.* Ouagadougou, mai 2000.

OIT/IPEC, *Lutte contre le trafic des enfants à des fins d'exploitation de leur travail dans les pays d'Afrique occidentale et centrale : Projet de Rapport final du Cameroun.* Yaoundé, mai 2000.

OIT/IPEC, *Problématique du trafic des enfants au Mali : rapport d'enquête.* Bamako, mai 2000.

OIT/IPEC, *Problématique du trafic des enfants au Togo : rapport d'enquête.* Lomé, mai 2000.

OIT/IPEC / BICE, *Problématique du trafic des enfants en Côte d'Ivoire : rapport d'enquête.* Abidjan, avril 2000.

OIT/IPEC, *Lutte contre le trafic des enfants à des fins d'exploitation de leur travail dans les pays d'afrique occidentale et centrale : trafic des enfants au Bénin, analyse opérationnelle.* Cotonou, février 2000.

OUA, *Rapport du Secrétaire Général sur le trafic des enfants et des femmes en Afrique*, Commission du Travail et des Affaires Sociales de l'OUA, 24ème session ordinaire, 9-14 avril 2001, Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire.

SALAH R., UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa, *Child Trafficking in West and Central Africa: an overview.* Paper presented at the first Pan African Conference on human trafficking, WOTCLEF, Abuja, 19-23 February, 2001.

SANON P.H., *Guide méthodologique pour l'analyse de situation des enfants ayant besoin de mesures spéciales de protection en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.* UNICEF, Bureau Régional pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre, Abidjan, octobre 1998.

UNICEF, *Recommandation concernant le Programme de Pays* (E/ICEF/2001/P/L._/Add.1) Conseil d'Administration, deuxième session ordinaire de 2001, 4-7 septembre 2001 : Gabon, Nigeria, Togo.

UNICEF, *Medium-term strategic plan for the period 2002-2005*, Executive Board 2001 Second Regular Session, E/ICEF/2001/13.

UNICEF, *Country Notes for the West and Central Region of Africa*, Statement by Rima Salah, Regional Director for West and Central Africa to the First Regular Session of the Executive Board, January 2001.

UNICEF, *Country Note*, Executive Board: Gabon (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.12) 27/11/2000, Nigeria (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.15) 13/11/2000, Togo (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.18) 21/11/2000.

35

UNICEF, *UNICEF and Child Labour: A Plan of Action 2000-2002*, Programme Division/Child Protection Section. New York, June 2000.

UNICEF, *First Consolidated Donor Report on the UNICEF Global Child Labour Programme: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned (1999)*, Programme Division/Child Protection Section. New York, June 2000.

UNICEF, *Evaluation of the Capacity Building Programme on Child Labour (1997-1999)*. Evaluation, Policy and Planning Series, N°EPP-2000-005, UNICEF, New York, May 2000.

UNICEF, *UNICEF Experience in Combatting Child Trafficking in West and Central Africa*, Special Protection Programme for Children, Programme Section, UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa, December 2000.

UNICEF, *Trafic international d'enfants en Côte d'Ivoire*, Rapport d'enquête. UNICEF, Bureau Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, décembre 1998.

CHILD TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA: POLICY RESPONSES

The trafficking of children is one of the gravest violations of human rights in the world today. Every year, hundreds of thousands of children are smuggled across borders and sold as mere commodities. Their survival and development are threatened, and their rights to education, to health, to grow up within a family, to protection from exploitation and abuse, are denied.

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre has worked with the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa to identify effective policy solutions to this issue in eight countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. This study focuses on a region that is badly affected by this phenomenon, aiming to increase understanding of this reality and maximize the effectiveness of measures to overcome it. It illustrates the importance of field-driven research and the essential role that research plays in policy formulation and the proper design of programmes.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
Piazza SS. Annunziata, 12
50122 Florence, Italy

Tel.: +39 055 203 30
Fax: +39 055 244 817
E-mail (general information): florence@unicef.org
E-mail (publication orders): florenceorders@unicef.org

Website: **www.unicef-icdc.org**

ISBN: 88-85401-80-5

37

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").